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EPA Region III
Office of Public Affairs
Mid-Atlantic Headlines
Monday, August 19, 2013
*** DAILY HOT LIST ***

Delaware makes big gambit over smog rule in contesting EPA

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL State environmental regulators are arguing for the right to allow local power plants and factories to go outside Delaware to buy credits for pollution reduction, a practice that could lead to more pollution produced here. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency warned last year that it could not accept the rule change, which applies to new sources of pollutants that form ground-level ozone, a major contributor to urban smog. Potential offset sources under the rules could be as distant as Wisconsin, Tennessee, New York and North Carolina. Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control Secretary Collin P. O'Mara said Delaware's ozone sources already are well-controlled, with most smog ingredients blowing into the state from smokestacks and tailpipes to the west. Federal regulations nevertheless require Delaware businesses to more than offset, or cancel out, any new ozone-forming pollution from large projects, because the state fails to meet federal smog standards. Lack of affordable offsets inside the state and continuing pollution from the west, O'Mara said, "has a negative impact on Delaware's air quality and economy." "I think this is breaking new ground, but it's based on the science showing that 95 percent of our pollution is from out-of-state sources," O'Mara said. "We believe that our approach is consistent with the science, that it's better for air quality because there will be reductions in other states, and it's more cost-effective," he added. In-state emissions control credits now can cost as much as \$10,000 for each ton of emissions, O'Mara said, or as much as 200 times higher than the costs in nearby states outside the EPA's "non-attainment" area for ozone. "We end up paying more for projects in our state, and slightly higher prices because of that, and higher health care costs" because of pollution arriving from other states, O'Mara said. During a public hearing late last year on an earlier version of the plan, an EPA official wrote that the agency "could not approve, as currently proposed," DNREC's plan because it appeared to exceed the state's authority.

MINING: Researchers say they can ID pollution sources in Appalachian waters

GREENWIRE Chemicals found in waters affected by mountaintop-removal coal mining sites are distinct from those found upstream, Duke University researchers say in a new study. Duke's Nicholas School of the Environment says its findings help distinguish naturally occurring materials from pollution from mountaintop-removal mining (MTM) or other activities. "Because they allow us to distinguish if contaminants are coming from natural sources, fracking and shale gas development, coal mining, coal ash disposal, or other causes," said lead author Avner Vengosh, Duke geochemistry and water quality professor. Another Vengosh study released last year found links between coal ash dumps in North Carolina and water pollution. His research has also dismissed links between hydraulic fracturing and waterway contamination. For the latest study -- published online this month in the peer-reviewed journal *Environmental Science and Technology* -- Vengosh and his co-authors studied the chemical signatures of water samples collected in 2010 from the Mud River and its tributaries in southern West Virginia. They examined isotopic compositions of sulfur in sulfate, carbon in dissolved inorganic carbon, and strontium. Isotopes are defined as variations of one same chemical element. An element may have the same number of protons but a different number of neutrons. "Essentially, we found that these elements have unique isotopic fingerprints, meaning we can use them as diagnostic tools to quantify mountaintop mining's relative contribution to contamination in a watershed," Vengosh said. The result, the researchers wrote, was that isotopic compositions connected to the three chemical elements "measured in saline and selenium rich MTM impacted tributaries are distinguishable from those of the surface water upstream of mining impacts." They added, "These traces can therefore be used to delineate and quantify the impact of MTM in watersheds." Mountaintop-removal mining involves removing the surface to reach coal seams below. Waste rock and other material, or overburden, is often dumped in nearby "valley fills." Selenium, often found nearby, can be harmful to aquatic life.

Democrats square off over call for fracking moratorium in Pennsylvania

HARRISBURG PATRIOT NEWS An internal party disagreement over fracking is bubbling up and pitting the Pennsylvania Democratic state committee against many of its own elected officials -- and possibly even President Barack Obama. Battle lines were drawn in June when the state committee passed a resolution calling for a moratorium on fracking until health and environmental concerns in the state are more clearly addressed. Though the resolution was little more than a position statement, debate over it was intense and emotional. But the 115-81 vote didn't put an end to the debate, and emotions continued to run high among commonwealth Democrats. Two of the seven declared Democratic gubernatorial candidates -- U.S. Rep. Allyson Schwartz and former Environmental Protection Secretary Katie McGinty -- criticized the moratorium. Another gubernatorial candidate and former DEP Secretary John Hanger conditionally opposed it, saying state forests, parks and public lands should be exempt from fracking. Even former Gov. Ed Rendell, one of the nation's preeminent Democrats, condemned the resolution as "very ill-advised." Inter-party dissension over the controversial vote continued last month with 19 state House Democrats -- many of whom from the fracking region -- signing a letter to state party Chairman Jim Burn that called the resolution "short sighted." And earlier this month eight Senate Democrats weighed in with their own letter to Burn saying they were "dumfounded" by the resolution and urged him to "re-examine" the issue.

For better air, more wind and solar

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER Philadelphia, we have a problem - an air-quality problem. Fortunately, we can all help solve that problem. Philadelphia has a big problem with air pollution. In April, the American Lung Association published its latest "State of the Air" report with local grades on air quality. The report showed that Philadelphia ranked as 11th most polluted in the nation for year-round particle pollution in 2009 through 2011, the years this report covered. And that's not all. Philadelphia also ranked 20th for most ozone-polluted city. While that's a big improvement over previous years, we still have dangerous levels of air pollution. The lung association publishes its report not to scare people, or to discount the great progress the people of Pennsylvania have made for many years in cleaning up the air. Instead, we want to inform everyone across the country about the air they breathe in order to encourage them to take action against pollution. At the American Lung Association, we have advocated for the Environmental Protection Agency to continue its work for clean, safe air, which includes cleaning up gasoline and cars, funding the work to provide healthy air, reducing pollutants from coal-fired power plants, and strengthening outdated ozone standards. It's not just the EPA that can protect the air we breathe. It can start with you. Over the last year, the lung association in Pennsylvania has collaborated with ChoosePAWind to increase awareness about the choices individuals have in the type of generation they use to power their homes. ChoosePAWind's website (www.choosepawind.com) explains the benefits of switching to locally sourced wind energy and outlines the options available. Much of the electricity that powers our homes comes from burning coal. Coal-burning power plants are a major source of the emissions that create the ozone and particle pollution that Philadelphians breathe. Currently, Pennsylvania has 24 operating wind farms, with a total installed capacity of more than 1,340 megawatts that generate more than three billion kilowatt-hours of clean electricity each year. That's enough to power nearly 330,000 homes without producing harmful air emissions that come from burning fuel.

Duke Study Says Isotopes Can Help Trace Pollution to Mountaintop Mines

BNA DAILY ENVIRONMENT REPORT Certain elements found in an Appalachian watershed where coal mining occurs have unique chemical compositions that can help identify whether stream pollution comes from mountaintop removal mining, a Duke University study has found.The study, published Aug. 15 in Environmental Science & Technology, found that sulfur, carbon, and strontium have distinct chemistries that can help determine if watershed contamination is from natural sources or other sources, according to a university news release. Specifically, the researchers found that the unique isotopic chemistries of these elements are like "fingerprints," showing if contamination is from mountaintop coal mining. These distinctive chemistries can narrow the search for the source of the pollution, possibly identifying the coal seam where the mine runoff originated, although scientists cannot identify a specific mine as the source, Avner Vengosh, professor of geochemistry and water quality at Duke's Nicholas School of the Environment and co-author of the study, told BNA. Findings from the study, "The Isotopic Imprints of Mountaintop Mining Contaminants," could help state and local regulators monitor water pollution and could help communities, environmental groups, and mining companies during lawsuits over water contamination, where groups could prove definitively what type of contamination exists, according to Vengosh. It could also help prevent contamination by evaluating the sources of existing pollution and identifying measures to protect the environment from those sources.

Commentary: The importance of Maryland's leadership on climate change

BALTIMORE SUN (By Carol Browner) During my service as the secretary of Environmental Regulation in Florida and Environmental Protection Agency administrator, I came to appreciate that state action is central to strong environmental protection. Working with the states, the EPA has established and implemented important pollution limits for dangerous toxic emissions including arsenic, mercury and lead. It only makes sense to do the same for carbon pollution, just as Gov. Martin O'Malley recently proposed. Maryland has spent decades trying to reverse the impacts of the dangerous pollution of our air and water by fighting fiercely to protect the Chesapeake Bay and the important economic benefits it provides to the state and the region. Now, the state is leading the way to reverse the harmful impacts of climate change with a bold plan to reduce carbon pollution by 25 percent.

EPA asked to reopen Dimock investigation

SCRANTON TIMES-TRIBUNE (Saturday) Ray Kemble brought a gallon of well water from his Susquehanna County home to Courthouse Square in Scranton on Monday, the first stop on a trip to Washington D.C. to implore the Environmental Protection Agency to reopen its investigation of gas drilling and drinking water contamination in Dimock Township. A previously undisclosed document from the federal agency, that suggested the possibility of drilling-related methane contamination of groundwater, motivated Kemble and another Susquehanna County resident, Craig Stevens, to make the trip. They planned to drop off roughly 50,000 petitions at the agency's headquarters. The petitions, collected online by several environmental organizations, ask the EPA to return to Dimock and conduct another investigation of drinking water supplies. Last year, federal regulators found no need to "take further action." Its analysis of local drinking water samples revealed no threat to human health. Kemble, 58, remains unconvinced. To demonstrate his ire while speaking to the media outside the courthouse, he held a plastic gallon container filled nearly halfway with a brownish-yellow liquid that he says he collected from the well of his Dimock home. After drilling got underway near his home off Carter Road, he said his clean water became filthy...The EPA investigation in Dimock revealed elevated levels of methane, barium, arsenic, and sodium. But regulators said homeowners' water had either been later successfully treated or did not pose a health concern. They also noted the contaminants are naturally occurring substances. Twenty wells had methane levels above the state's reporting threshold and five of those were at or above the EPA's "trigger level" — the point when dissolved methane begins to escape into the atmosphere.

PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

Double-dipping in Pa. gas leases (Sunday) William A. Capouillez may be the hardest-working man in Harrisburg. From 7:45 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day, Capouillez works as a director for the Pennsylvania Game Commission, where his responsibilities include overseeing leases for oil and natural gas development on 1.4 million acres of public game lands. During his lunch breaks, coffee breaks, evenings, and holidays, Capouillez has a profitable side job. He acts as an agent for property owners who lease their land for oil and gas development, signing private deals with the same companies that often work with his state agency. Business rivals, including other leasing agents and drilling companies, have complained for years to legislators and to the Governor's Office that Capouillez's dual roles represent a conflict of interest. They say Capouillez is in a position to trade on inside information from his public job by signing up private landowners near state game lands. But Capouillez, who is paid \$75,834 as director of the Bureau of Wildlife Habitat Management, says the state has been unharmed by his outside activity. The commission has approved his supplemental employment on the condition that he doesn't exploit confidential information and that he doesn't use state time or equipment for his private practice. "If you understood the facts, the appearance wouldn't look the way it does," Capouillez, 48, said in a recent interview. "There's nothing hidden beneath the blanket, there's no smoking gun." The Governor's Office takes a dim view of Capouillez's consulting work. "This type of conflict, or an appearance of a conflict, wouldn't be tolerated in the Corbett administration," said Eric Shirk, a spokesman for Gov. Corbett. There is little the governor can do. The Game Commission is an independent agency, much like the Turnpike Commission and the Public Utility Commission. The Game Commission's eight members are gubernatorial appointees, but the governor does not control the agency's activities.

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Read more at http://www.philly.com/philly/business/20130818_Double-dipping_in_Pa_gas_leases.htm#P5s3wPSU5H9rFFpF.99

For better air, more wind and solar Philadelphia, we have a problem - an air-quality problem. Fortunately, we can all help solve that problem. Philadelphia has a big problem with air pollution. In April, the American Lung Association published its latest "State of the Air" report with local grades on air quality. The report showed that Philadelphia ranked as 11th most polluted in the nation for year-round particle pollution in 2009 through 2011, the years this report covered. And that's not all. Philadelphia also ranked 20th for most ozone-polluted city. While that's a big improvement over previous years, we still have dangerous levels of air pollution. The lung association publishes its report not to scare people, or to discount the great progress the people of Pennsylvania have made for many years in cleaning up the air. Instead, we want to inform everyone across the country about the air they breathe in order to encourage them to take action against pollution. At the American Lung Association, we have advocated for the Environmental Protection Agency to continue its work for clean, safe air, which includes cleaning up gasoline and cars, funding the work to provide healthy air, reducing pollutants from coal-fired power plants, and strengthening outdated ozone standards. It's not just the EPA that can protect the air we breathe. It can start with you. Over the last year, the lung association in Pennsylvania has collaborated with ChoosePAWind to increase awareness about the choices individuals have in the type of generation they use to power their homes. ChoosePAWind's website (www.choosepawind.com) explains the benefits of switching to locally sourced wind energy and outlines the options available. Much of the electricity that powers our homes comes from burning coal. Coal-burning power plants are a major source of the emissions that create the ozone and particle pollution that Philadelphians breathe. Currently, Pennsylvania has 24 operating wind farms, with a total installed capacity of more than 1,340 megawatts that generate more than three billion kilowatt-hours of clean electricity each year. That's enough to power nearly 330,000 homes without producing harmful air emissions that come from burning fuel.

Tacony Creek: A plastic bag mess About a year ago, Philadelphia resident Kelly O'Day took a tour of the Tacony Creek Park. He'd been a resident of Philadelphia most of his life, but he'd never been there. He thought it would be a beautiful nature spot. Instead, the retired environmental engineer, who spent much of his career in the business of water supply and wastewater, was appalled at all the trash he saw in the creek. The trees were draped with plastic bags. Cups and cans were awash in the shallows. "To me, it could be almost as nice as the Wissahickon," he said. "But it was grossly overpolluted. I've been in pollution control ... That creek has not made a lot of progress." So he decided to document the problem. Ever since, he's been walking along the creek, photographing the mess and trying to figure out how it happens. "I've got the skills and the background and the interest," he said. "I'm bound and determined to see what we can do to clean up the creek and its tributaries." He's been issuing a series of reports that he emails, and the latest one went out last week summarizing the sources and extent of the trash going into the Tookany-Tacony-Frankford Creek, which he affectionately just calls "the Tacony." He realized one of the major sources of trash to the creek was street litter that flows into the Philadelphia Water Department storm sewer system and is discharged to the creek through an outfall. The storm sewers are designed to collect trash before it goes into the system, and the department regularly cleans out the inlets. But O'Day set up an aquarium to simulate a storm. He added plastic bags and some dirt and churned it up. The bags stayed suspended in the water ... good candidates for washing into the creek instead of getting trapped in the stormwater inlet. Philadelphia is poised to take on the issue of plastic bags this fall, in all likelihood. Industry has championed the idea of a more vigorous plastic bag recycling program. Others have proposed instituting a plastic bag fee. Or an all-out plastic bag ban.

Camden County gets seven new auto charging stations Libraries have long been about more than books. Some rent out artwork. In more eco-minded communities, they loan Kill-A-Watt meters for measuring how much juice a particular devices uses. Camden County has topped them all. Two libraries now have charging stations for electric cars. It's part of a new \$60,000 network of seven charging stations the county freeholders recently had installed. The Department of Energy paid half the tab with a matching grant. Camden County also entered into a pilot cost-sharing program with ECoality North America to install the countywide charging infrastructure. The charging stations are located at the South County Regional Branch Library in Winslow Township and the Bellmawr Branch Library, plus the Camden County Boathouse at Cooper River, the Camden County Technical School in Gloucester Township, and Camden County College's Campuses in Gloucester Township, Cherry Hill and Camden City. The new charging stations are on the U.S. Department of Energy's website www.afdc.energy.gov/locator/stations/. Meanwhile, it looks as if New Jersey is a good place to have an electric car. A recent analysis by Climate Central, a Princeton-based group that conducts scientific research on climate change, looked at how where you live makes a difference in the greenness of what you drive. "An electric car is only as good for the climate as the electricity used to power it. And in states that rely heavily on fossil fuels like coal and natural gas for their electricity there are many conventional and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles that are better for the climate than all-electric cars," the authors of the report wrote.

Coatesville youth to host environmental awareness festivalA group of Coatesville youth will host a festival promoting environmental awareness Saturday at Gateway Park in the city. Members of the Coatesville Youth Initiative's ServiceCorps, a leadership development program sponsored by the Brandywine Health Foundation, will lead the 3d Annual Coatesville Recycling & Living Green Festival where the theme of the day will be "Reuse-Recycle-Reduce." Area residents can sign up to receive a free recycling bin and drop off recyclable items including plastic, glass, computers, paper, cell phones and electronics. Artist Joe Boyle will create a sculpture out of the items turned in during the day. Children's games, face painting and refreshments will also be offered. The festival is 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 50 South First Avenue, Coatesville. Admission is free. For information call 610-380-9080, ext. 110.

PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

Community gardens not only provide good nutrition, but also the perfect exercise When working in community gardens, participants reap what they sow and more. A recent study conducted by researchers at the University of Utah showed that the health benefits of a community garden go far beyond the fresh fruits and vegetables added to your diet. After studying the body mass index data of 198 community gardeners and their same-sex siblings, spouses and neighbors, researchers found they had lower BMIs than their non-gardening counterparts. They were also less likely to be obese or overweight. When a gardener's BMI, a measure of body fat, was compared to their non-gardening spouse's BMI, the researchers found no discernible difference. This led them to conclude that the spouses were benefiting from the harvested food and possibly helped out in the garden. Results were reported April 18 in the American Journal of Public Health. These results came as no surprise to Judith Dodd, a registered dietitian at UPMC, who often advises her patients to take up gardening as the perfect exercise. "Walking is wonderful, but think about what you have to do when you're gardening. You're going to be bending, you're going to be pulling the arms back and raking, you're going to use the whole body, and you don't even think you are," she said. Gardening provides what she calls ongoing exercise. The body is constantly in motion. A garden also needs constant care because without it, plants will fail to thrive. This season, plants are thriving in a number of community gardens across the city. Marisa Manheim, the City Growers coordinator, has located and mapped more than 60 community gardens in the region -- and those are only the ones she knows about. City Growers is a program of Grow Pittsburgh that helps set up and maintain four to five community gardens each year. When people come to City Growers to

begin a community garden, it is for many different reasons. Some want more growing space, others want to do it for the community and there are those who want guidance from the experienced staff. Regardless of their reasons, Ms. Manheim sees a lot of extra benefits flowing from their decision.

PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE REVIEW

Drilling in parks condemned A Western Pennsylvania group that opposes Marcellus shale gas drilling practices is encouraging Allegheny County residents to speak out at a council meeting against drilling underneath county parks. The initial focus of potential drilling activity is Deer Lakes Park in West Deer and Frazer. "Next, it's Harrison Hills ... and they're going to continue to try to make a profit on what belongs to the people," said Carrie White of Fawn, a member of Fawn Against Marcellus. "This is a public park and it needs to be protected." White said she plans to attend the Aug. 20 county council meeting with members of Marcellus Protest, a regional coalition of groups and individuals who oppose shale gas drilling because of potential environmental and health impacts. Allegheny County leaders are weighing an offer from oil and gas company Huntley & Huntley Inc., which has signed leases around Deer Lakes and plans to drill just outside the park early next year. If county leaders make a decision by January, company officials say it could add wells to extract gas from under the park. County Executive Rich Fitzgerald has said if the county doesn't act it could lose out. A Tribune-Review analysis found the county could receive between \$40 million and \$96 million from drilling under Deer Lakes. West Deer and Frazer officials said they feel they'll have little say on whether drilling extends under the county park. But they are hopeful that the county will do what is in the best interest of residents. "When Range (Resources) came to us about leasing township park property, we made it crystal clear to them that they could have pipes under the park, but not have any well pads in the park, itself," said West Deer Township Manager Daniel Mator. "I would hope that the county follows that same line of thinking." Schools project promotes cautious use of chemicals and allergy prevention Before McKeesport Area School District became involved with the Healthy Schools Collaboration, high school science teacher Marla Hayes had already implemented a school recycling program. "We have been doing things. [The collaboration] is going to take it even further," said McKeesport Superintendent Timothy Gabauer. With just a few days before school begins, Ms. Hayes is preparing her classroom by de-cluttering it and considering natural cleaning solutions safe for children with allergies as part of the collaboration, set to make a difference this fall. The collaboration, funded by the Heinz Endowments, includes McKeesport and the Allegheny Valley School District, and it was started after a Heinz study recognized there are ways to improve school environments and enhance children's health in Western Pennsylvania schools. A group of school administrators and staff have been meeting with collaborators Andrew Ellsworth and Jenna Cramer to discuss changes since February 2012. Key concerns in environmental health involve air quality, lighting, acoustics, building materials, and exposure to chemicals, fragrances and contaminants.

STATE IMPACT PENNSYLVANIA

Corbett Listens To Royalty Complaints From Bradford County Commissioners Bradford County's two Republican commissioners were in Harrisburg today meeting with Governor Corbett to discuss widespread complaints some companies are underpaying gas royalties.Commissioners Doug McLinko and Daryl Miller spent about half an hour talking to Corbett and his staff this afternoon. "The governor was very receptive. He listened," says McLinko, "I'm very happy with the meeting." McLinko wouldn't elaborate on what was specifically discussed, but he remains supportive of the natural gas industry and says only a few companies are out of line. He adds many of his constituents are small property owners. "This is not about a lot of money. It's about principle. We're going to still fight on a local basis." Many of the complaints have centered around Pennsylvania's biggest gas driller, Chesapeake Energy.

ALLENTOWN MORNING CALL

Man travels from Wales to confront PPL over reservoir Cardiff city councillor trying to stop development on drained site. Phil Bale strode into PPL headquarters Friday on a mission to restore and protect a popular lake near his home.

HARRISBURG PATRIOT-NEWS

Democrats square off over call for fracking moratorium in Pennsylvania An internal party disagreement over fracking is bubbling up and pitting the Pennsylvania Democratic state committee against many of its own elected officials – and possibly even President Barack Obama. Battle lines were drawn in June when the state committee passed a resolution calling for a moratorium on fracking until health and environmental concerns in the state are more clearly addressed. Though the resolution was little more than a position statement, debate over it was intense and emotional. But the 115-81 vote didn't put an end to the debate, and emotions continued to run high among commonwealth Democrats. Two of the seven declared Democratic gubernatorial candidates – U.S. Rep. Allyson Schwartz and former Environmental Protection Secretary Katie McGinty – criticized the moratorium. Another gubernatorial candidate and former DEP Secretary John Hanger conditionally opposed it, saying state forests, parks and public lands should be exempt from fracking. Even former Gov. Ed Rendell, one of the nation's preeminent Democrats, condemned the resolution as "very ill-advised." Inter-party dissension over the controversial vote continued last month with 19 state House Democrats – many of whom from the fracking region – signing a letter to state party Chairman Jim Burn that called the resolution "short sighted." And earlier this month eight Senate Democrats weighed in with their own letter to Burn saying they were "dumfounded" by the resolution and urged him to "re-examine" the issue.

HAZELTON STANDAD SPEAKER

Marcellus drillers consider federal option HARRISBURG - Many Marcellus Shale operators will likely opt to use federal rules as the focal point of their efforts to improve air quality at well sites, a spokesman for an industry trade group said Monday. The state Department of Environmental Protection is giving Marcellus well operators the choice of obtaining a state-approved air quality plan or else implementing procedures that would be more stringent than new federal air quality rules for oil and gas sites. Patrick Creighton, a spokesman for the Marcellus Shale Coalition, said he can't speak for every well operator, but a number of them are likely to find the federal option preferable to submitting a formal plan to DEP which could take a while and involve modifications and changes. "A plan approval process takes a long time," he said. The new DEP air quality criteria would limit nitrogen oxide emissions and require drillers to develop leak repair programs. Creighton said both options will build on efforts by the drilling industry to improve air quality. "This is an industry that is continuing to improve upon its footprint," he said. Oil and gas wells in Pennsylvania have had a blanket exemption from needing air quality plan approvals since 1996.

READING EAGLE

Living Green: Pursuing indoor air quality (Saturday) Some vital aspects of living a green-geared life start not just outdoors, but inside of our homes. "Overall, a big part of living green starts with the air you breathe in your home," said Tami Shimp, vice president of development and community relations for the Berks County Conservancy. "Radon is a huge issue in Berks County," Shimp said about the odorless, radioactive gas linked to causing lung cancer in those who have it leaking into their houses. "We encourage everybody to test for radon." Shimp noted that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has a Web page, www.epa.gov/radon, dedicated to radon awareness. And www.radon.com is also a good resource. "The EPA states a level of 4 (picocuries per liter of air, or pCi/L) or above as dangerous," she said. "But 11.8 is the average radon level in Berks County." Her own home had a level of 68 pCi/L years ago and needed extreme mitigation, she said. Another way to improve air quality is to use paint with low or no volatile organic compounds, or VOCs, known to be toxic and harmful to human and animal health. Studies of VOCs conducted in the 1980s by NASA and the EPA showed plants can eliminate some toxins from the air, but adequate ventilation is a more important factor. Avoiding liquid or spray air fresheners and other chemical products is a greener practice for both family and fur kids. "Check that your heaters are vented and working properly," Shimp added, because improperly vented systems can introduce carbon monoxide into the air. Make sure carbon monoxide detectors are working in case levels suddenly rise. Occupants can be alerted and escape. She pointed out that those with asthma or other lung conditions are all the more at risk when the air in a home is not its healthiest. Particulate matter in the air can greatly affect the elderly and young children adversely even though it might not be something easily seen, she noted. "If you're committed to living green, make sure to start with your home," Shimp said.

From ashes of foundry, Phoenixville is revitalized PHOENIXVILLE, Pa. -- The Phoenix of Egyptian and Greek mythology was a magnificent bird that was reborn from its own ashes. The Phoenix of Phoenixville and Chester County reality was an iron works from which arms for armies, rails for railroads, backbones for bridges and myriad more products for industrial and domestic uses were crafted. The Phoenix Iron Works went cold a half-century ago. But from its ashes is a gem of a park and heritage center that is symbolic of the renaissance of the town around it. Phoenixville's lively main street is lined with an ever-increasing roster of shops and restaurants. And just off that street is a lasting memorial and lovely monument to the natural and man-made qualities that contributed to its growth. The Phoenixville Foundry is a conference, reception and event space within the restored walls of a circa 1882 Phoenix Iron and Steel Co. building. It has been configured to reveal original truss work beneath a 60-foot-high ceiling of the main ballroom. A staircase winds up to the Cupola Mezzanine, and the layout is decorated with artifacts, murals and photographs from the days when the foundry was in full blast. The largest of those artifacts is the massive, restored Wooden Jib Crane. It is believed to be the last piece of equipment of its kind in the country. It was one of four cranes that off-loaded massive forms that were sent to build railroads, buildings and bridges. For "A Day Away" purposes, the attraction of The Foundry is its fascinating Schuylkill River Heritage Center in the foyer of the event spaces.

SCRANTON TIMES TRIBUNE

EPA asked to reopen Dimock investigation (Saturday) Ray Kemble brought a gallon of well water from his Susquehanna County home to Courthouse Square in Scranton on Monday, the first stop on a trip to Washington D.C. to implore the Environmental Protection Agency to reopen its investigation of gas drilling and drinking water contamination in Dimock Township. A previously undisclosed document from the federal agency, that suggested the possibility of drilling-related methane contamination of groundwater, motivated Kemble and another Susquehanna County resident, Craig Stevens, to make the trip. They planned to drop off roughly 50,000 petitions at the agency's headquarters. The petitions, collected online by several environmental organizations, ask the EPA to return to Dimock and conduct another investigation of drinking water supplies. Last year, federal regulators found no need to "take further action." Its analysis of local drinking water samples revealed no threat to human health. Kemble, 58, remains unconvinced. To demonstrate his ire while speaking to the media outside the courthouse, he held a plastic gallon container filled nearly halfway with a brownish-yellow liquid that he says he collected from the well of his Dimock home. After drilling got underway near his home off Carter Road, he said his clean water became filthy...The EPA investigation in Dimock revealed elevated levels of methane, barium, arsenic, and sodium. But regulators said homeowners' water had either been later successfully treated or did not pose a health concern. They also noted the contaminants are naturally occurring substances. Twenty wells had methane levels above the state's reporting threshold and five of those were at or above the EPA's "trigger level" – the point when dissolved methane begins to escape into the atmosphere.

Marcellus drilling spurs road bond debate HARRISBURG - Natural gas drilling in the Marcellus Shale formation is spurring debate about requiring owners of overweight vehicles to pay higher road bonds. These bonds help pay for damage to roads caused by large vehicles and frequent truck traffic. A recent study by the Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center on the impact of gas drilling points out local taxpayers bear the burden of fixing roads when damage exceeds the road bond amount. Since 1978, state law has allowed local officials to require owners of overweight vehicles to post bonds of up to \$12,500 per road mile. This bond amount has remained unchanged even though the current cost of replacing damaged roadway is estimated at more than \$100,000 per road mile. Municipal officials can set a 10-ton vehicle weight limit on roads found in need of traffic restrictions. Owners of overweight vehicles can apply for a travel permit and post the road bond. The \$12,500 may fill a few potholes, said Elam Herr of the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors, which wants a higher bond amount set. "But it isn't going to do much more than that," he said. The exploration of the Marcellus formation, underlying much of Northeast and Central Pennsylvania, by energy companies during the past two years has brought new focus to this debate. Some of the drilling equipment weighs more than 100 tons, far above the posted weight limits on rural roads and bridges, according to the budget center study. The study suggests the number of truck trips per well can range from 350 to 1,000. PennDOT officials are considering whether to set a higher bond amount through regulation, as is customary, but no decisions have been made. Some state lawmakers favor stronger action. A measure by Rep. Mark Longietti, D-7, Sharon, would require PennDOT to set a new bond amount by 2011 based on maintenance costs and update it every three years. The House Transportation Committee held a hearing on the bill last year. Mr. Longietti's bill includes a presumption that in a legal dispute, overweight trucks would have caused road damage unless the owners can prove otherwise. This would shift the burden of proof in favor of local municipalities.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

WASHINGTON POST

Are Washington's policies causing a retirement 'brain drain' at federal agencies?A new online ticker from the National Active and Retired Federal Employees association claims to show the hours of institutional knowledge lost through federal-worker retirements this year, illustrating a supposed "brain drain" caused by increased retirements at a time when the government is cutting back on hiring and freezing salary rates. The ticker showed nearly 920 million hours of lost experience in 2013 as of Sunday evening. NARFE claims retirements cost the government an average of 10,000 years of knowledge every day. Data from the Office of Personnel Management shows that more than 82,000 federal workers have filed retirement claims since January, representing a jump of 30 percent. The agency has said a dramatic increase in retirements this year for the financially struggling Postal Service has contributed to the rise. NARFE said in a statement that policy decisions to furlough workers, freeze pay rates and increase contributions toward retirement benefits may be encouraging workers to retire prematurely. It said the losses are "threatening the services they dedicated their careers to building." The numbers on the ticker may oversimplify matters a bit.

DELAWARE

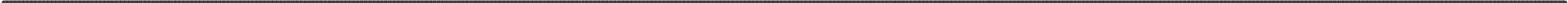
WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL

Delaware makes big gambit over smog rule in contesting EPA State environmental regulators are arguing for the right to allow local power plants and factories to go outside Delaware to buy credits for pollution reduction, a practice that could lead to more pollution produced here. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency warned last year that it could not accept the rule change, which applies to new sources of pollutants that form ground-level ozone, a major contributor to urban smog. Potential offset sources under the rules could be as distant as Wisconsin, Tennessee, New York and North Carolina. Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control Secretary Collin P. O'Mara said Delaware's ozone sources already are well-controlled, with most smog ingredients blowing into the state from smokestacks and tailpipes to the west. Federal regulations nevertheless require Delaware businesses to more than offset, or cancel out, any new ozone-forming pollution from large projects, because the state fails to meet federal smog standards. Lack of affordable offsets inside the state and continuing pollution from the west, O'Mara said, "has a negative impact on Delaware's air quality and economy." "I think this is breaking new ground, but it's based on the science showing that 95 percent of our pollution is from out-of-state sources," O'Mara said. "We believe that our approach is consistent with the science, that it's better for air quality because there will be reductions in other states, and it's more cost-effective," he added. In-state emissions control credits now can cost as much as \$10,000 for each ton of emissions, O'Mara said, or as much as 200 times higher than the costs in nearby states outside the EPA's "non-attainment" area for ozone. "We end up paying more for projects in our state, and slightly higher prices because of that, and higher health care costs" because of pollution arriving from other states, O'Mara said. During a public hearing late last year on an earlier version of the plan, an EPA official wrote that the agency "could not approve, as currently proposed," DNREC's plan because it appeared to exceed the state's authority.

Editorial: Climate report will help Delaware business Last month an official from the U.S. Department of Energy warned about the effect of climate change on just our energy system:

Mosquito-borne diseases up; not 'cause for alarm' The state has recorded its first finding of eastern equine encephalitis since 2008, state officials said Friday. In addition, a total of six findings of West Nile virus have now been recorded this year, they said.

Propane leak causes explosion A propane leak in a Peninsula Oil & Propane Inc. building in Blades caused an explosion Friday that could be felt several blocks away, but it caused no injuries, firefighters said.



WEST VIRGINIA

CHARLESTON GAZETTE

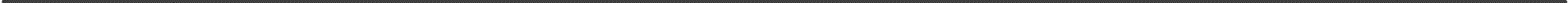
Editorial: Bees: Agriculture loss America's food supply depends greatly on honeybees. As they buzz from blossom to blossom, gathering nectar, they incidentally transport pollen that fertilizes about one-third of crops. But this natural symbiosis is at risk, because millions of U.S. bee colonies mysteriously are dying. Since 2006, an estimated 10 million American hives have been lost, and three-fourths of U.S. beekeepers have quit the business. Europe, Asia and other regions likewise are suffering. Some alarmed ecologists repeat a quote attributed (perhaps mistakenly) to Einstein: "If the bee disappears from the surface of the globe, man would have no more than four years to live." However, the Aug. 19 *Time* says this dire warning isn't quite correct. "The backbone of the world's diet -- grains like corn, wheat and rice -- is self-pollinating," the magazine says. But bees are essential for melons, apples, pears, cherries, apricots, lettuce, berries, nuts, squashes, cucumbers and manifold others -- about one in three U.S. foods. If bees disappeared, billions would be lost from America's economy and nutrition would be severely limited. Researchers can't yet learn what's causing the massive die-off. Some experts blame 1,200 different pesticides sprayed on farm fields. Others blame microscopic parasites, bacteria or viruses. Europe banned suspected pesticides called neonicotinoids, but French bees kept on dying. Scientists are rushing to find an explanation. "One way we all can help is planting bee-friendly flowers in backyard gardens and keeping them free of pesticides," *Time* says. Good idea.

BLUEFIELD DAILY TELEGRAPH

Valve-turning ceremony to celebrate clean water flowing in Oakvale areaOAKVALE — One big water valve representing hundreds of water taps through the Oakvale area will be turned Aug. 23 when the Oakvale Road Public Service District and other entities cerebrate new water service for hundreds of people. A valve-turning ceremony scheduled at the East River Ruritan Building in Oakvale will mark the completion of the Mercer/Summers Phase IV A and Kellysville I and II Extension Water Project. Work started on the project in October 2011, said Pamela Browning, manager of the Oakvale PSD. The project started in the Hilltop Drive area near Princeton, she said. “It goes down through the Poplar Grove area, around Goodwin’s Chapel Road, into the town of Oakvale, a small section of the Cheesy Creek area, a section of Route 12 down off Oakvale, and extends through Kellysville,” Brown said. Almost 400 customers will be served by this water line extension. “The last customer count was around 370 households,” Brown stated. Before this water pipeline reached these residences, people living in the area had to rely on wells for their water. Many of these wells do not produce water suitable for consumption. “They were contaminated,” Brown said. When water samples from the wells were tested, the examinations revealed e-coli bacteria and coliform bacteria, she recalled. Both types are hazardous to human health. The project cost approximately \$7.1 million, Brown said. Work on the pipeline started with a design from the West Virginia Bureau of Public Health, according to information with the Region I Planning & Development Council. Funding was provided by the Oakvale Road PSD, West Virginia American Water, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers grant, a grant from the Governor’s Contingency Fund, an Appalachian Regional Commission grant, a HUD Small Cities Block grant. Both the Appalachian Regional and the HUD grants were administered by the state. There was also a loan from the West Virginia Infrastructure and Jobs Development Council.

ASSOCIATED PRESS (W. VA.)

Company cited in fatal W.Va. well pad blast CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) - Federal regulators have cited a company whose worker died in an explosion at a Taylor County natural gas production site. The Charleston Gazette reports the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration issued a serious citation to Central Environmental Services LLC. The Feb. 15 explosion occurred on an EQT Corp. gas well pad near Flemington. Brian Hopkins was killed as he attempted to transfer briny wastewater from a tank into a truck. It's a routine activity at drilling sites, and explosions are uncommon. The OSHA citation alleges Central Environmental employees used headlamps that didn't prevent sparks, fires or explosions. Central Environmental Services is based in the Wood County community of Washington, and no one answered an after-hours call at the company Friday



MARYLAND

BALTIMORE SUN

Commentary: The importance of Maryland's leadership on climate change (By Carol Browner) During my service as the secretary of Environmental Regulation in Florida and Environmental Protection Agency administrator, I came to appreciate that state action is central to strong environmental protection. Working with the states, the EPA has established and implemented important pollution limits for dangerous toxic emissions including arsenic, mercury and lead. It only makes sense to do the same for carbon pollution, just as Gov. Martin O'Malley recently proposed. Maryland has spent decades trying to reverse the impacts of the dangerous pollution of our air and water by fighting fiercely to protect the Chesapeake Bay and the important economic benefits it provides to the state and the region. Now, the state is leading the way to reverse the harmful impacts of climate change with a bold plan to reduce carbon pollution by 25 percent.

SALISBURY DAILY TIMES

Residents say not to proposed chicken plant near Millsboro Residents aren't opposed to the 700 jobs that a new chicken plant near Millsboro might create — just not in their backyard. The proposed site of a new poultry processing facility at the former Vlasic pickle factory just east of town has neighbors up in arms over the possible environmental affects. “It should be torn down and (the land should be) left as a resource as part of the bay,” said Cindy Wilton, a member of Protecting Our Indian River, a new local environmental group formed by residents who oppose the chicken facility. “Now they want to go in, bringing something more intensive than a pickle factory.” Harim Allen, a South Korean poultry producer, is waiting on the Sussex County Board of Adjustment for a decision on the company's application for a special zoning. The plant must be zoned for potentially hazardous use, which may include dust, odor, noise and impact on waterways, said Sussex County Director of Planning and Zoning Lawrence Lank. The issue is not on the agenda for the board’s meeting Monday, he said. Lank said he has received mostly negative comments from the public, though government agencies have not opposed the project. Pollution from hazardous chemicals and poultry has already taxed residents in Millsboro. A former chicken vaccine manufacturing operation impacted groundwater between Wharton Street and South DuPont Highway. In 2005, Delaware state water authority detected high concentrations there of the industrial solvent trichloroethylene. In 2009, the Environmental Protection Agency added the site to its National Priorities Superfund list.

EDITORIAL: Solar power is increasingly being used to produce electricity on Delmarva

Affordable and unlimited energy — perhaps by harnessing the wind or sun — has been an elusive dream for centuries. Mankind has, for example, been tapping the sun for energy in a variety of ways since ancient times. The solar energy panel was invented in 1883, but it wasn't until 1941 that the first silicon solar cell was produced. It was very inefficient, but was improved somewhat in 1954. In 1962, the first-ever communication satellite, Telstar, was launched.After nearly 100 years of research and development, solar power remained mostly a curiosity, too inefficient and costly to be widely adopted.It took the energy crisis in the early 1970s to bring the price of solar panels down to a more affordable level, but in America solar power was still outside the mainstream. In 1982, the first solar car was produced; this never caught on either. In 1998, flexible solar roofing shingles were invented. Despite all this attention, it wasn't until recently that any urgency was attached to the development of practical and affordable solar energy production. Just last week, the White House installed its first solar panels while the president and his family vacationed, fulfilling a promise made three years ago. Closer to home, Perdue Farms Inc. received Platinum LEED building certification and recognition from the U.S. Green Building Council for the company's environmentally friendly renovation of its headquarters in Salisbury. In addition to a host of energy-saving built-ins, the company installed a highly visible array of solar panels behind its headquarters, along westbound Route 50. Those panels now supply an impressive 95 percent of the electricity needed to operate the office building. Perdue did not make an investment by purchasing the panels; instead, the company entered into an agreement with a power company to purchase electricity in exchange for the panels, which the power company continues to maintain and operate.In Sussex County, residents and small business owners are seeing mixed results from their investments in solar energy panels. One resident is paying just \$10 per month for electricity during the summer, while another reports cutting his electric bill in half. Delaware ranks seventh in per-capita solar installations in 2013, according to a report from The Environment America Research and Policy Center.

ANNAPOLIS CAPITAL GAZETTE

Blue catfish could rule Chesapeake Bay waters Big, nonnative and hungry, the blue catfish is spreading into Chesapeake Bay tributaries and could alter the balance of species in local waters. One reason: As the fish grow close to their normal 30- to 40-pound weight, they shift their feeding habits from a little bit of everything to fish only. That has some worried about what will happen to smaller species in the bay and its tributaries. South Riverkeeper Diana Muller has not seen reports of the catfish in her river, and hopes they stay away. “They are crazy, nasty, big giant fish,” Muller said. “And they will eat everything. There goes our yellow and white perch and other fish.” But short of paying a bounty on *Ictalurus furcatus*, there is not much to be done about the spreading population. Protectors of wildlife would like to see the expanding range of the species curtailed, but anglers like the challenge of catching them — they put up a fight.

CARROLL COUNTY TIMES

Commissioners to discuss town environmental fund program The Carroll County Board of Commissioners will define the purpose and spending criteria for the town environmental fund program Thursday.

Carroll towns see few applications for Bay Restoration Fee exemption

For several months — and in some cases, years — most low-income residents have been able to apply for an exemption to the annual \$60 Bay Restoration Fee. However, some municipalities have seen very ...

FREDERICK NEWS POST

Letter: Let state, local jurisdictions handle their own environmental issues I was very pleased to see Shannon Moore's letter entitled "Clarifying News-Post 'rain tax' editorial." Ms. Moore has been outstanding in her governance and application of the Frederick County Office of Sustainability and Environmental Resources! She has excellent insights, a sound understanding of the various rules and regulations, and more importantly, the repercussions of these mandates from the Environmental Protection Agency. As to the requirements being placed upon states and municipalities by the EPA, I suggest the following. The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) and Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permits should no longer be overseen by the EPA. Every state (all 57) has its own environmental agencies/departments and each is just as competent as any federal agency. (Having written NPDES permits for many years, I am very cognizant of their requirements and techniques for their application.) While many will argue against the formation of the EPA in the 1970s, we did have regions of this nation with rivers on fire and air quality that was horrific. Unfortunately, upon its creation, President Nixon made the EPA a cabinet position. This means that with every change in leadership, this agency is either held in some restraint or given authority beyond their reach. The mere swipe of a pen via an executive order can put this agency into overdrive under the guise of a mandate. The one-size-fits-all approach of the federal government has long outlived its utility. We must now hand the reins over to our capable and knowledgeable state and local authorities. People like Ms. Moore have a thorough understanding of the local issues and environment as well as the larger impacts on our nation and globe. If we desire a truly cleaner environment and manageable regulations, this is the only approach that will afford such a desired result.

ASSOCIATED PRESS (MD)

Rare mosquito-borne virus confirmed in Maryland horse Maryland officials said Friday that a case of Eastern equine encephalitis has been confirmed in a horse in Worcester County and urged horse owners to consult with their veterinarians about vaccinations. The horse, which had not been vaccinated, tested positive for the virus, which, like West Nile virus, is spread by mosquitoes. The disease can cause a swelling of the brain. Although it is rare in humans, it can occur when an infected mosquito bites a person. The last confirmed human case in Maryland was in 1989. The last confirmed case in a horse in the state was in 2009 in Wicomico County.

VIRGINIA

NORFOLK VIRGINIAN PILOT

McAuliffe touts environmental protection in Norfolk (August 16) NORFOLK -- Terry McAuliffe, the Democratic candidate for governor, stopped by a Norfolk seafood business Thursday to unveil a package of environmental protection proposals. Touring George's Seafood, a fresh fish wholesaler, McAuliffe called water-related businesses “a great economic driver for the commonwealth.” Clad in a plaid shirt, jeans and a Virginia Beach ballcap, the former Democratic national chairman checked out iced-down cobia, red snapper and king mackerel being readied for shipment to restaurants and supermarkets up and down the East Coast. “We need to make sure we’re doing smart policies so that our watermen and fishermen can thrive and be prosperous,” he said. McAuliffe’s environmental platform includes pledges to:

- Direct the Department of Environmental Quality to work with localities and businesses to implement plans aimed at regulating the flow of pollutants into the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

- Create a climate change adaptation commission — a bipartisan group of scientists, policymakers, conservationists and industry representatives — to develop a comprehensive plan to protect coastal communities from rising sea levels.

- Continue the moratorium on uranium mining in Virginia.

- Oppose hydraulic fracturing, commonly known as “fracking,” and horizontal drilling in the George Washington National Forest.

- Preserve at least 400,000 acres of open space over four years.

- Protect the land preservation tax credit, which offers tax write-offs for preserving Virginia’s agricultural, forested, historic and scenic open spaces.

McAuliffe faces Republican Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli this fall in a hard-fought campaign that is drawing national attention. Anna Nix, a Cuccinelli spokeswoman, responded to McAuliffe’s environmental platform by branding him a proponent of job-killing government regulations. “There’s little question that protecting Virginia’s natural beauty and environment are critical objectives that both Republicans and Democrats support,” Nix said by email. “But the reality is that those goals must be balanced in order to ensure employees and employers are not unnecessarily impacted by burdensome regulations that lead to job losses and higher energy prices for all Virginians.”

Virginia still isn't plugged in to Tesla's electric cars RICHMOND -- A fleet of sleek, high-performance vehicles zoomed around the track - but in near silence. There were spectators - but only a few dozen instead of the thousands who usually flock to events at Richmond International Raceway. The virtually noiseless electric cars of Tesla Motors circled the 3/4-mile oval as a mix of lobbyists, state officials and car enthusiasts admired their performance earlier this month. However, to hear the Tesla faithful tell it, the car of the future is struggling to keep a foothold in Virginia and other states because of bureaucratic roadblocks and resistance from more traditional auto dealers. "If we can get Virginia up to speed, it will open the floodgates," predicted David Link of Williamsburg, who owns a Tesla Model S sedan. The commonwealth is a key proving ground for Tesla in protecting its interests, as it did in June when North Carolina lawmakers quashed a bill that would have banned the automaker's Internet-based car sales. Direct sales to consumers don't appear in jeopardy in Virginia, but Tesla wants actual stores here. Back in April, the California company's request to operate a dealership was denied by the state Department of Motor Vehicles based on a law that prohibits auto manufacturers from being dealers. Since 1998, DMV has made 14 exceptions to the dealer rule for makers of specialty motorcycles, trucks and trailers. That ruling, now under appeal in Fairfax County Circuit Court, came despite a hearing officer twice recommending that Tesla be allowed to do so under a legal exception when no other dealer is available to market its product. A chance remains that litigation could be averted if a deal - said to be in the works between the state, Tesla and the Virginia Automobile Dealers Association - materializes. Even so, that remedy might apply only to Tesla's gallery store in Tysons Corner - a location from which the company cannot sell cars, discuss pricing or offer test drives, while a nearby Washington store can. That has the company surrogates accelerating toward a broader legislative fix as it powers up plans for several stores in Virginia. Founded a decade ago, Tesla launched its first vehicle, the Roadster sport coupe, in 2008. Last year, it rolled out the Model S, which Motor Trend magazine named its 2013 Car of the Year. Consumer Reports also gave it a rave review. The recognition helped the company, as did financial news in May: Tesla posted a quarterly profit for the first time and said it had fully repaid to the federal government a \$465 million auto bailout loan.

ASSOCIATED PRESS (VA.)

Va. DEQ to hold public meeting in Norton on study of pollutants in Clinch River, tributaries NORTON, Va. — A public meeting is scheduled in Norton this week on a pollution study of the Clinch River and several tributaries. The study identified sources of bacterial contamination and pollutants in the waterways. The meeting is set for 6 p.m. Thursday at the Norton Community Center. A public comment period will begin Thursday and continue through Sept. 23. The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality says the river has failed to meet standards for fecal coliform bacteria and E.coli. The problem also exists in several tributaries, including Bear, Fall, Little Stoney, Russell, Stanton, Stony, Cove, Stock, Copper, Moll, Valley and Blackwater creeks. The DEQ will submit a report to the Environmental Protection Agency after it considers public comments. The report will include total maximum daily loads for the waterways.

MISCELLANEOUS

BNA DAILY ENVIRONMENT REPORT

Duke Study Says Isotopes Can Help Trace Pollution to Mountaintop Mines Certain elements found in an Appalachian watershed where coal mining occurs have unique chemical compositions that can help identify whether stream pollution comes from mountaintop removal mining, a Duke University study has found.The study, published Aug. 15 in Environmental Science & Technology, found that sulfur, carbon, and strontium have distinct chemistries that can help determine if watershed contamination is from natural sources or other sources, according to a university news release. Specifically, the researchers found that the unique isotopic chemistries of these elements are like “fingerprints,” showing if contamination is from mountaintop coal mining. These distinctive chemistries can narrow the search for the source of the pollution, possibly identifying the coal seam where the mine runoff originated, although scientists cannot identify a specific mine as the source, Avner Vengosh, professor of geochemistry and water quality at Duke's Nicholas School of the Environment and co-author of the study, told BNA. Findings from the study, “The Isotopic Imprints of Mountaintop Mining Contaminants,” could help state and local regulators monitor water pollution and could help communities, environmental groups, and mining companies during lawsuits over water contamination, where groups could prove definitively what type of contamination exists,

according to Vengosh. It could also help prevent contamination by evaluating the sources of existing pollution and identifying measures to protect the environment from those sources.

Environmental Justice Advocates Back Startup, Shutdown Rule Environmental justice advocates meet with officials from the White House Council on Environmental Quality and EPA to support a proposed rule requiring 36 states to revise their implementation plans to control excess air emissions during times of equipment startup, shutdown, and malfunction. The Sierra Club, which petitioned EPA to find that the state plans do not adequately address emissions at those times, says the proposed rule is “one of the most significant environmental justice issues on President Obama’s agenda this year.”

Voluntary Standards Prepared for Shale Gas Operations in Appalachia Natural gas producers in Appalachia soon will have a voluntary system of high standards and third-party certifications to offer to the public and government officials as an assurance that they are mindful of the potential water and air pollution that can spread from shale gas wells. The standards are written by the Center for Sustainable Shale Development, a collaborative organization created by Chevron Corp., Shell Oil Co., EQT Corp., and Consol Energy Inc., as well as environmental advocacy groups and philanthropic organizations.

GREENWIRE
MINING: Researchers say they can ID pollution sources in Appalachian waters Chemicals found in waters affected by mountaintop-removal coal mining sites are distinct from those found upstream, Duke University researchers say in a new study. Duke’s Nicholas School of the Environment says its findings help distinguish naturally occurring materials from pollution from mountaintop-removal mining (MTM) or other activities. "Because they allow us to distinguish if contaminants are coming from natural sources, fracking and shale gas development, coal mining, coal ash disposal, or other causes," said lead author Avner Vengosh, Duke geochemistry and water quality professor. Another Vengosh study released last year found links between coal ash dumps in North Carolina and water pollution. His research has also dismissed links between hydraulic fracturing and waterway contamination. For the latest study -- published online this month in the peer-reviewed journal *Environmental Science and Technology* -- Vengosh and his co-authors studied the chemical signatures of water samples collected in 2010 from the Mud River and its tributaries in southern West Virginia. They examined isotopic compositions of sulfur in sulfate, carbon in dissolved inorganic carbon, and strontium. Isotopes are defined as variations of one same chemical element. An element may have the same number of protons but a different number of neutrons. "Essentially, we found that these elements have unique isotopic fingerprints, meaning we can use them as diagnostic tools to quantify mountaintop mining’s relative contribution to contamination in a watershed," Vengosh said. The result, the researchers wrote, was that isotopic compositions connected to the three chemical elements "measured in saline and selenium rich MTM impacted tributaries are distinguishable from those of the surface water upstream of mining impacts." They added, "These traces can therefore be used to delineate and quantify the impact of MTM in watersheds." Mountaintop-removal mining involves removing the surface to reach coal seams below. Waste rock and other material, or overburden, is often dumped in nearby "valley fills." Selenium, often found nearby, can be harmful to aquatic life.

Environmental justice activists to meet with White House over 'Start-up, Shutdown' rule The Sierra Club is sending environmental justice activists to meet with White House officials today to discuss what it has called a loophole that allows power plants to skirt emissions laws during startup and shutdown periods.

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Judges urge Congress to avoid more sequestration cuts Top federal judges in 49 states are urging lawmakers to avoid another round of automatic spending cuts that they say would have a “devastating and long-lasting impact” on the federal courts. The unusual letter from the chief judges of trial courts in every state but Nevada says that the \$350 million reduction in the judiciary’s lower budget for this year has dramatically slowed court proceedings and jeopardized public safety. The judges say there are fewer probation and other law enforcement officers to deal with record numbers of convicts who have been released from prison or given alternative sentences. The letter was sent this week to congressional leaders in both parties in the House and the Senate. Congress is not in session in August. “We had to let people know that we’ve cut so far past the fat and so far past the muscle that we’re into the bone,” Chief Judge Loretta Preska of the U.S. District Court in Manhattan said Thursday.Preska, an appointee of President George H.W. Bush, helped organize support for the letter.

BURLINGTON COUNTY TIMES (NJ)
Climate change at center of political storm (August 13) As Gov. Chris Christie runs for re-election, the Sierra Club is blasting his administration for downplaying the role of climate change in the lead-up to Superstorm Sandy even as the state Department of Environmental Protection recently released an unpromoted report attributing the rise in sea levels to climate change. The report was buried on the DEP website rather than being touted through a DEP news release, environmental advocates said Monday. Jeff Tittel, director of the New Jersey Sierra Club, attributes this to the Christie administration’s downplaying of the role of climate change as a cause for the devastating storm last fall. “While the Governor denies any link between Sandy and climate change, the new DEP Office of Science report, “Climate Change in New Jersey: Trends in Temperature, Precipitation, Extreme Weather Events and Sea Level Rise” (June 2013), clearly acknowledges the connection,” he noted in a Sierra Club news release and in a teleconference interview on the subject. But both Larry Ragonese and Larry Hajna, spokesmen for the DEP, said the accusations were without merit. “That’s completely off base,” Hajna said of Tittel’s remarks. “We’ve posted a number of trend reports on our website ... There was nothing buried about this. He’s grasping at something to make a political point.” “These are pieces of information,” added Ragonese, who said that the DEP releases all kinds of data on all types of environmental topics on its website. He called Tittel’s comments mixing “fact with fiction.” In a May interview with MSNBC, Christie was asked about climate change and its role in causing Sandy. “I haven’t been shown any definitive proof yet that that’s what caused it,” the governor answered. “...this is a distraction. I’ve got a place to rebuild here and people want to talk to me about esoteric theories.” Hajna said “the point to a statement the governor made is you can’t take one storm and extrapolate that it was the result of climate change. I think any climatologist would agree with that.” Reputable scientists at the DEP are studying the issue, Hajna said, and the DEP already announced changes in state flood plain maps requiring homes to be raised as well as a \$300 million plan to move people in affected areas. The information in the report is a summary of scientific research, not a fresh study, he said.